<u>REMARKS</u>

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 13-22, and 24 are currently pending. Claims 3 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice; Claim 24 has been added; and Claims 1, 2, 10, 11, and 19-22 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the <u>Trunick</u> reference ("Keep An Eye On Your Freight") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,168,444 to <u>Cukor et al.</u> (hereinafter "the '444 patent"), further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,179,283 to <u>Gerstenberg et al.</u> (hereinafter "the '283 patent"); and Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the <u>Trunick</u> reference and the '444 and '283 patents, further in view of the <u>Pure PDF</u> reference.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the interview granted Applicants' representative on April 15, 2008, at which time the outstanding rejection for the claims was discussed. In particular, the teachings of the '283 patent regarding the display of a status diagram was discussed. At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner indicated his position that, based on the disclosure in the <u>Trunick</u> reference of outputting the current status of a transfer of goods, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include a graphically representation of the current status, in light of the "status diagram" disclosed by the '283 patent.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a physical distribution business management method, comprising:

> an image data generation step for generating image data
> of a document on which a condition for exporting or importing
> goods is described, said image data generation step generating

said image data upon reception of said document obtained as a
result of execution of a physical distribution step;

an image data storage step for storing the image data
generated in said image data generation step to be associated
with said goods to a freight tracking information database, upon
generation of said image data;

a document data storage step for storing document data
described on said document to said freight tracking information
database in association with said goods, upon generation of said
image data, said document data including date data
representing an execution date of the physical distribution step
related to said document;

an identification data storage step for storing
identification data that identifies a party concerned with export
or import of said goods among, in addition to a consignor and a
consignee, a number of parties concerned with export or import
of said goods; and

a data output step, when said party concerned specifies
data relating to goods, for obtaining image data and document
data in said freight tracking information database, and for
outputting said obtained data,

wherein said identification data storage step decides a
range of the image and document data to said party concerned
based on the stored identification data, and said data output step
obtains data matching said decided range;

wherein said data output step includes the steps of,
based on said decided range and said specified data relating to
the goods, obtaining image data of an associated one or a
plurality of documents, and outputting said image data and said
document data to a terminal of said concerned party to thereby
display a status of a transfer of said goods, on said terminal of
said concerned party; and

wherein said data output step further comprises
displaying, on a display device of the terminal based on said
obtained data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of
said goods, wherein the step of displaying the diagram includes

displaying a plurality of images, each image
representing a physical location used in the transfer of said
goods; and

displaying an arrow between two images in said
diagram when the date data in the obtained document data

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> indicates that a physical distribution step involving the physical locations corresponding to the two images has been completed, and repeating the step of displaying an arrow for all of the date data in the obtained document data to thereby display the current and historical status of the transfer of the goods.

The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.[1]

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicants note that the Office Action does not specifically address all of the limitations recited in Claim 1, but lumps all of the limitations recited in Claims 1-22 together, and picks out certain features of the cited references on pages 2-6 of the Office Action. However, it is unclear to Applicants which limitations and which claims are being referred to in the Office Action. In particular, Applicants note that the Office Action never indicates which elements recited in Claim 1 are not taught by the Trunick reference or by the '444 patent. Accordingly, in any future Office Action, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be specifically addressed by number, and that the deficiencies of these references cited in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), be clearly spelled out.

The Trunick reference is an article that describes the current status of freight tracking systems. In particular, the Trunick reference describes systems that can provide information and status of a shipment as it moves through a distribution pipeline. The Trunick reference discloses that terminal-based inquiries can be made using particular information related a shipment and that status information can be displayed. However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the Trunick reference fails to disclose a data output step that comprises displaying, on a display device of a terminal based on obtained data, status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the Trunick reference fails to disclose that the step of displaying the diagram includes displaying

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[1] See, e.g., pages 36 and 37 and the specification.

a plurality of images, each image representing a physical location used in the transfer of the goods, and displaying an arrow between two images in the diagram when the date data and the obtained document data indicates that a physical distribution step involving the physical locations corresponding to the two images has been completed and repeating the step of displaying an arrow for all of the date data in the obtained document data, to thereby display the current and historical status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the Trunick reference merely describes generally that various computer systems are available for providing status information regarding shipments to users.

The '444 patent is directed to a system for image processing of documents generated in shipping transactions, the system including remote scanning stations 10 and an image file server 13. The '444 patent discloses that the document images can be captured by scanners at a plurality of stations, where the images of the shipping documents can be reviewed at a plurality of image processing stations 18. Thus, the '444 system allows for the printing of transaction invoices from the image data and a database along with a hard copy of any shipping document images that are to accompany the invoices. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '444 patent fails to disclose the step of outputting image data and document data to a terminal of a concerned party to thereby display a status of the transfer of goods on a terminal of a concerned party, as recited in amended Claim 1. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the '444 patent fails to disclose the step of displaying a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of the goods, wherein the step of displaying the diagram includes displaying a plurality of images, each image representing the physical location used in the transfer of the goods, and displaying an arrow between two images in the diagram when the date data and the obtained document data indicates that a physical distribution step involving the physical locations corresponding to the two images has been completed and repeating the step of displaying an arrow for all of the date data in the

obtained document data, to thereby display the current and historical status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1.

The '283 patent is directed to a method for controlling an intermediate stacking device of flat shipments, in particular letter sorting facilities that include a stacking device, a moveable stacking cart, a bottom transport belt, a separating device, and a shipment sensor. In particular, '283 Figure 2 is an illustration of a state diagram of the process, showing possible states for the process and state transitions from one process to the other. The Table in column 4 of the '283 patent discloses the conditions that cause the transitions from one state to another. However, **Applicants note that the '283 patent fails to disclose that the diagram shown in Figure 2 is a diagram that is ever displayed**. Rather, it appears that the Office Action is relying on Figure 2 merely because it is a figure that has arrows.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '283 patent fails to disclose a step of displaying, on a display device of a terminal based on obtained document data, a diagram illustrating the status of the transfer of goods, wherein the step of displaying the diagram includes displaying a plurality of images, each image representing a physical location used in the transfer of the goods, and displaying an arrow between two images in the diagram when the date data and the obtained document data indicates that a physical distribution step involving the physical locations corresponding to the two images has been completed and repeating the step of displaying an arrow for all of the date data in the obtained document data, to thereby display the current and historical status of the transfer of the goods, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, '283 Figure 2 is merely a state transition diagram. The '283 patent does not disclose images that represent **physical locations** used in the transfer of goods. Further, the '283 patent does not disclose displaying an arrow based on date data obtained in document data. Further, the '283 patent does not disclose the display of the current and historical status of the transfer of goods. '283 Figure 2 does not indicate where

the process starts or where it currently is at any given time. Applicants note that the <u>Trunick</u> reference would not cure the deficiencies of the '283 patent in this regard. The <u>Trunick</u> reference does not disclose displaying current and historical data based on date data obtained in document data.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the <u>Trunick</u> reference, the '444 patent, and the '283 patent are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the step of displaying a diagram that includes <u>displaying a plurality of images, each image representing a physical location used in the transfer of goods, and displaying an arrow between two images in the diagram when the date data and the obtained document data indicates that a physical distribution step involving the physical locations corresponding to the two images has been completed and repeating the step of displaying an arrow for all of the date data in the obtained document data, to thereby display the current and historical status of the transfer of the goods,</u> as recited in amended Claim 1. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references disclose storing document data that includes date data representing an execution date of the physical distribution step related to the document, <u>upon generation of the image data,</u> as recited in amended Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of the <u>Trunick</u> reference, the '444 patent, and the '283 patent.

Independent Claims 10 and 19-22 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 10 and 19-22 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 10 and 19-22 (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 23 is rendered moot by the present cancellation of that claim.
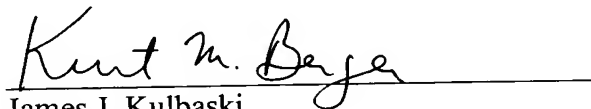
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The present amendment also sets forth new Claim 24 for examination on the merits. New Claim 24, which depends from Claim 1, clarifies that the plurality of images in the diagram includes at least one of <u>an image of a production plant, an image of a shipping port, an image of an unloading port, and an image of a client</u>. New Claim 24 is supported by the originally filed specification and does not add new matter.[2]

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 10, and 19-22 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the cited references.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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[2] See, e.g., Figure 7 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.